



Lathrop Gage Goes Coast to Coast with New Los Angeles Office

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Noted Trial Boutique SSAB Will Become Firm's First West Coast Office; Adds Intellectual Property and Trial Depth

KANSAS CITY, Mo. and LOS ANGELES (Nov. 21, 2008) – Lathrop Gage L.C. will merge with the Los Angeles trial boutique SSAB (Spillane Shaeffer Aronoff Bandlow LLP), effective Jan. 1, 2009.

With the addition of this California office, Lathrop Gage will have a coast-to-coast presence; the firm is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., with offices in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New York, and an affiliate in Washington, D.C.

Joining Lathrop Gage will be SSAB named partners John Shaeffer, David Aronoff and Lincoln Bandlow, along with four associates and nine staffers. Shaeffer will serve as partner in charge of the office, which will remain at SSAB's current location in Century City.

"Opening a Los Angeles office gives us a true national reach, but the real impetus for the move is the opportunity to work even more closely with an incredibly talented group of people," said Joel Voran, Lathrop Gage CEO. "John and his team are exceptional lawyers, and clients seek them out, as we did, because they are smart, dedicated and pragmatic – real strategic trial lawyers. They are at the top of their game, entrepreneurial, and great additions to our firm."

IP Strength Across the Country

The SSAB intellectual property practice, which centers on the entertainment, advertising, computer game and media industries, is a natural fit for Lathrop Gage's IP capabilities, Voran said. Indeed, this combination creates a nationwide IP practice approximately 60 attorneys strong:

- On the West Coast, the seven SSAB IP and entertainment attorneys have been recognized by *Best Lawyers in America* and others as among the top practitioners in Southern California. Their clients include NBC Universal, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Media Professional Insurance, Zorro Productions, Inc., Hallmark Cards, Nordstrom and Ross Stores.
- In the Midwest, Lathrop Gage has one of the largest IP departments, with 42 attorneys in Colorado, Kansas and Missouri. With a base of operations here, Voran said, Lathrop Gage is able to offer Midwest



value to its roster of national and international IP clients, including Payless ShoeSource, Hewlett Packard and BlueScope Steel.

- On the East Coast, Lathrop Gage's New York office boasts 10 well-known IP practitioners, including Bill Hansen and Beth Atkins, named among the "World's Leading Trademark Practitioners" by *Managing Intellectual Property* magazine.

Additional Services for California Clients

Shaeffer said SSAB was courted by other national firms, but his experience working with Lathrop Gage drove his decision to merge.

"We know Lathrop Gage, having worked side-by-side with them for several years," he said. "It is refreshing to join up with people who not only know the business of law, but have a real zest for the practice, combined with a Midwestern work ethic."

Shaeffer said that the decision was "grounded in camaraderie," and that he was excited that through the combined firm, SSAB's clients could access a full spectrum of legal services nationwide.

"Specifically, the firm's substantial Midwest and Rocky Mountain presence and its dynamic office in New York give us outstanding bench strength at rates that are very attractive to our clients," he said. "These are huge advantages for them that will leverage the success of our office."

About Lathrop Gage:

A full-service law firm, Lathrop Gage LLP has 300 attorneys in 11 offices across the country, from Los Angeles to New York. In 2008, *Chambers USA* ranked Lathrop Gage's corporate, environmental, intellectual property, litigation, real estate and labor and employment teams among the best in their respective regions. For more information, visit www.lathropgage.com.